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Governors State University Makes a Promise

University Park, IL, November 14, 2007 - Dr. Elaine P. Maimon, President of Governors State University, recently announced the GSU Promise, a commitment to provide a debt-free education to qualified low-income graduates from Illinois Community Colleges. This bold initiative is designed to make a bachelor's degree attainable for many of the State's most overlooked and underserved students.

According to national statistics, the vast majority of minority students begin college careers in community college. Of those who start with the hope of completing a four-year degree, only 10 percent accomplish that goal within six years. Studies also show that twenty percent of the highest achieving students, from families at the lowest income level, do not attend college at all.

"Fear of debt is a major obstacle to motivating poverty level, first-generation college students to complete college," added Maimon. "Many do not complete the FAFSA form, which establishes eligibility for all public scholarship grants, because they are not properly advised."

To address this problem, and to alleviate the potential crippling debt that keeps many students from completing their degree programs, Governors State University is building an endowment to supplement funds available from federal and state sources to Illinois community college graduates living at or below the poverty-level. Fundraising for this endowment has already exceeded the initial goal of \$100,000. Additional contributions are being sought currently to secure an initial \$1 million endowment to move the program forward and begin serving the needs of students.

"We have much more to do and many more students to serve," said Maimon. "GSU is not a university on a hill. We are a public square--a people's university. Our job is to help as many students as we can to earn degrees, achieve their educational goals, and fulfill their dreams. With the GSU Promise, we can provide a debt-free baccalaureate education for local community college transfer students at the poverty level. I can think of no better way to fulfill our mission."

For more information on how to help support the GSU Promise, call (708) 534-4105 or visit www.govst.edu/donate.

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